THE SMITH CHILDREN c 1881-1890

REFLECTIONS
by Jeffrey Hunt

This is certainly a portrait of the children of John and Esther Wells Smith, my great-great-grandparents.

I believe the boy may be Lewis Nolan Smith. His intense, piercing gaze closely resembles other known photographs of him. Until I can confirm whether this is Lewis or his younger brother James P. Smith, the identities of the girls remain tentative. Once the boy is positively identified, the rest may fall into place.

The children, listed by birth year:

Lewis Nolan Smith – 1871–1931
Ann E. Smith – 1872–1877
James P. Smith – 1875–1936
Susan E. Smith – 1876–1898
Bertha B. Smith – 1879–1958
Millie C. Smith – 1882–1929
Lillie Leone Smith – 1884–1977
Dollie Smith – 1885–1928

The location appears to be in front of a thick bed of blooming flowers. Behind them are faint outlines of forested hills, perhaps suggesting the landscape near Yoncalla or Elkton, where the family lived. A narrow path curves down the right side of the frame.

It's possible that the second girl from the left is my great-grandmother, Bertha Bright Smith. Her nickname was *Bright Eyes*, and looking at the photo, she does seem to share that same piercing gaze. The smallest child, standing at the far right, appears to be about two and a half years old and may be Lillie or Dollie.

It is curious that not all of the children were present. Perhaps they all couldn't fit into the shot, or perhaps the image was taken on a special occasion that included only these five siblings. Most likely, we will never know.

This photograph is one of three identical prints, each measuring: 9 15/16 inches wide by 6 7/8 inches high.

Note: One version of the print bears the name "Lillie" faintly written on the reverse, in the upper left corner. This may indicate the photo was intended for Lillie Leone Smith.

Lillie